Chapter Five: The Second Founder: 1876-1893

If Br Ludovic could be described as representing the Fr Champagnat/Br François strand of the Marist tradition, then the new Provincial, Br John Dullea might be described as the representative of the Fr Champagnat/Br Louis Marie strand. Like Br Louis Marie, he was by no means less ‘religious’ or less committed to catechetics and the development of personal piety, but he was better educated, more committed to sound teaching standards and to straightforward educational administration than his predecessor had been. He was to be Provincial of Oceania i.e. Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands for seventeen years in his first term, for nearly three in his second term (1897-1900) and Assistant-General responsible for the same area plus the British Isles and South Africa from 1900 till his death in 1914. If Br Ludovic left his mark on the Australian Marist tradition by his early foundation of the novitiate and his recruitment and formation of the first generation of Australian-born Marist Brothers, Br John made his by establishing a higher standard of teacher training and school administration and a pattern of semi-autonomous co-operation with the diocesan authorities for whom the brothers worked.

Although born in Ireland, Denis Dullea, as he was christened, left the ‘isle of saints and scholars’, with his parents, when he was still in primary school, to emigrate to America. The plan was aborted, however, when the ship caught fire and had to put into an English port for repairs. Young Denis’ mother died during the delay and his father gave up the American idea and sent him to boarding school in Belgium. From there he entered the Marist novitiate at Beaucamps and after temporary profession taught in several French schools, before being sent to St Mary’s school in Glasgow in 1861 and then, as Director, to St Andrew’s, also in Glasgow. There is little mention of his novitiate or post-novitiate training in France but he apparently completed a teaching diploma in Britain and applied to the Superior General for permission to do higher studies in mathematics. This was refused, but he was permitted to study Church History and he later told Br Ezechiel – the original nominee for the Australian mission - that he did not regret the change in direction. He felt that the historical perspective had given him a more balanced outlook on life.  

1 Doyle, *op.cit.* p137-138. Again, this chapter is indebted to Br Alban’s pioneering work on the major primary source for the period: the *Lettres D’Oceanie*. This is a large (1,122 single-space quarto pages) collection of letters mainly written in French, and by Br John Dullea, as monthly reports to the Assistant General or Superior General in Lyon. A typescript transcription of the *Lettres* – still mainly in French – is held in the Marist Brothers archives at Hunter’s Hill and the writer has read through those sections which deal with Br John’s responsibilities in Australia. They include, among other things, comments on his visits to the classrooms of the Sydney schools. Br John was a very competent and fair-minded Inspector and his *Lettres* are a more reliable source than Br Ludovic’s somewhat melodramatic *Annales*. 
He also had a continuing friendship with Br Nestor, the Assistant General for the St Paul Trois Châteaux province, who had developed the *brevet simple* and *brevet supérieur* courses for the French Marist *écoles normales.* Br Nestor was elected Superior General in 1880, after the death of Br Louis Marie, and in that capacity published and circulated his ‘Plan of Studies and Programs for Primary Teaching’ in March 1882. Although Br Nestor died after only three years in office as Superior General, Br John’s previous acquaintance with him and his mandatory regular correspondence with the General Council at St Genis Laval meant that he was continuously in contact with the mainstream developments of the Marist teaching tradition. He was, therefore, well qualified to become the Second Founder of that tradition in Oceania.

Yet he almost did not make the voyage to Australia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when he was summoned for briefing to the General House at Lyon from his school in Glasgow, his already shaky health collapsed and the doctor who attended him diagnosed advanced tuberculosis and advised not only that he should not make the journey, but that he had only months to live. Like Br Ludovic before him, Br John made a pilgrimage to the Hermitage and prayed before the tomb of Fr Champagnat, for the strength to carry out his mission. The hemorrhaging from his lungs ceased and within a few weeks he sailed for the Pacific, where the climate so suited him that he had no further pulmonary trouble. Although quite accepting of Fr Champagnat’s intervention in his cure, he was enough of a rationalist to attribute the sustained improvement in his health to the change of climate.

The New Broom

Although the effusive Br Ludovic was disappointed by Br John’s reserved and non-committal response to his welcome, he made no bones about accepting the authority of the new Provincial and encouraging the novices and recently professed Australian recruits to do likewise. For his part, Br John made no immediate change to Br Ludovic’s arrangement of the Province, nor to his organization of the St Patrick’s community at Church Hill. He did visit the farm at Parramatta and the land proposed for purchase at Hunter’s Hill, however, and quickly decided in favour of the latter, as the site for the novitiate. In this decision he was supported by Archbishop Vaughan, on whom he paid a courtesy visit and also to request formal approbation of the Ordinary for the setting up of the novitiate. Archbishop Vaughan took the opportunity to quiz the new Provincial on his understanding of the relations, particularly the financial relations, between the Ordinary and the Major Superiors of the order, as represented by Br John, in this case. The international, male, non-clerical Religious Orders were still something of a mystery to nineteenth century bishops, and one of the reasons Archbishop Vaughan favoured

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3 Ch. 4 p. 79.
4 *Lettres* 27.10.1879.
5 *Annales* pp. 190-192.
6 In Canon Law, the Archbishop, Bishop or Vicar Apostolic is referred to as the ‘Ordinary’ authority in a diocese and Rome will not usually approve any development in a diocese which does not have the approval of the Ordinary.
the Hunter’s Hill site for the novitiate was the proximity of the Marist Fathers at Villa Maria. Like most bishops, he did not believe that lay Religious – i.e. non-clerics - were competent to handle the spiritual direction and formation of postulants and novices, Br Ludovic’s success, to this point, notwithstanding.

After a preliminary survey of the situation in Sydney, Br John made his first visitation of the Marist Brothers’ mission in New Caledonia, which was also part of his responsibility, and, on his return to Sydney, accompanied the European brothers who had just arrived, to make the first Marist Brothers’ foundation in New Zealand. To be more precise, he took two of the European brothers and one of the earliest Australian recruits, Br Edwin Farrell, leaving the third European, Br Matthew McGaghran, to become part of the Sydney scene. This transfer of a local brother, even to the neighbouring colony of New Zealand, caused something of a stir among the Catholic community and especially with the young man’s parents, but once the bullet was bitten, such interchanges became commonplace. English-speaking New Zealand remained part of the Oceania Province until 1914, when it was hived off to become a separate Province, with responsibility for Fiji, and Samoa, where Marist foundations had been made. French-speaking New Caledonia was hived off in 1899, became an autonomous vice-Province in 1913, and was traditionally staffed from metropolitan France.⁷

After his return from New Zealand, Br John presided at the brothers’ mid-year retreat and made the appointments of the brothers to the various houses for the next academic year. He received visits from the Bishops of Adelaide and Perth, seeking brothers for their dioceses and also letters, with the same intent, from Fr Forrest SM, by then the Parish Priest of Napier, in New Zealand, but formerly, albeit briefly, a colleague of Fr Champagnat in his later years at the Hermitage. Much of his time, however, was spent supervising the building of the novitiate at Hunter’s Hill and dealing with complaints about the three Sydney schools and trying to improve the teaching methods and morale of the young brothers in these schools. Parramatta was running to the satisfaction of the Parish Priest Fr Rigney, but the French-born senior teacher there, Br Vial Dubois, was prone to migraines and proved a difficult personality for the young Australian brothers to live with. The Parish Priest at St Benedict’s, Fr Slattery, had never been reconciled to having the brothers ‘imposed’ on him and when first Br Augustine – whose health had collapsed again – and then Br Gregory, were moved away, he went to the Archbishop, demanding a public examination of the school. Even St Patrick’s was giving concern to the recently appointed French Marist Parish Priest, Fr Lemanant. Br Ludovic had never lived down the calumnies of Fr Kirk and his cronies and many parishioners continued to send their children to the subsidized Denominational School, which Fr Monnier had decided to keep open, rather than to the unsubsidized brothers’ school, complaining of the French Brother Director’s ‘haughtiness.’⁸

Despite the conversion of Fr Rigney to the deployment of Religious as teachers, the main resistance to the expansion of this new ‘system’ was the continuing opposition of the parish clergy, like Fr Slattery at St Benedict’s, who wished to retain lay teachers

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⁷ Doyle, op.cit. p. 165.
⁸ Lettres. 11.1.1877.
and the government subsidy. However, Br John was honest and professional enough to accept that there were serious shortcomings with the level of training of the young Australian brothers. He found their classroom discipline weak and even though Br Joseph, at the Select School at St Patrick’s, was popular with parents and students he seemed, to Br John, to ‘lack energy.’ Nor did he think the senior and French brothers who had been sent to Sydney up to that time were adequate for the raising of the young Australian brothers’ standards:

Brothers Ange, Landry, Vial, Theobald, Papinien and even Ludovic are not of a nature to give a very high idea of the studies our brothers pursue in Europe. They well know that what Br Augustine knows, he learnt here ... it is not with Brothers without a method of teaching and possessing very little knowledge that we can hope much for the formation of our novices in the posts: we want men of method (as well as) piety and devotedness, who would be the future of the mission.\(^9\)

From his earliest days in Sydney, his written reports back to the General House had included requests for reinforcements; but as the years went by and he received only promises, his pleas became more insistent and the stress on the qualifications of the recruits more emphatic:

Do make a generous effort to send us out a few decent Christians this year. Really, it is not encouraging to think of all the useless appeals I have now been making for four mortal years and after all the fine promises made before leaving and oft-repeated since. One is actually ashamed to speak of a promise made by St Genis now.\(^10\)

As a start to improving the teacher training Br John began accepting Juniors at St Patrick’s in August 1876. Juniors, in Religious Order terminology, are young people, of secondary school age, who express an interest in joining the order, who become boarders at a designated school and who follow a timetable which puts more emphasis on community prayer than in an ordinary boarding school. These boys still had to extend their own secondary education; but they could be deployed as monitors and pupil-teachers, like the previous generation of postulants and novices. The weakness of the system was that the teacher-mentors were, themselves, rather inexperienced – Br Augustine now being located at St Benedict’s rather than St Patrick’s – but Br John attempted to improve this situation by sitting in on the classes, whenever he was resident at Church Hill, and giving the young Australian brothers critiques of, and advice about, their methodology. He also placed the Juniors under the direction of one of the best-educated, Australian recruits, Br Stanislaus Healey. Br Ludovic remained the Superior of the community and Master of Novices, but he now did very little teaching in the school.

Archbishop Polding died in early March 1877 and, almost immediately, Archbishop Vaughan announced that the old Benedictine-founded Lyndhurst Academy

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\(^9\) *Lettres* 11.5.79.
\(^10\) *ibid.* 16.2.78.
\(^11\) *ibid.* 18.2.79.
would close. Privately, he approached the Marist Fathers about the possibility of their assuming responsibility for collegiate education in the diocese; but, despite the local Superior’s enthusiasm for the project, their Major Superiors in Lyon rejected the offer.\(^{12}\) Two years later, in 1879, the Archbishop managed to entice the Jesuit Fathers to open a college in Sydney which, after two re-locations, became St Aloysius’ College at Milson’s Point. And in 1880 he gave £6,000 from the sale of the Lyndhurst estate to the Jesuits, to begin their boarding college at Riverview.\(^{13}\) Br Alban, in his discussion of these offers, speculates, briefly, on the impact a Marist Fathers’ acceptance would have had on the Marist Brothers’ plans for a boarding school at Hunter’s Hill;\(^{14}\) but, just as interesting is the snapshot these arrangements provide of the Archbishop’s expectations of the Marist Brothers’ style of education. Vaughan was well aware of the Select School operating at St Patrick’s, but he evidently thought that the brothers were not capable of providing the classical education to which, he believed, the few upper class Catholics in NSW aspired. Interestingly also, Archbishop Carr, in Melbourne, had reached the same sort of conclusion, about the Irish Christian Brothers’ educational role, in that Archdiocese at almost exactly the same time.\(^{15}\)

The novitiate building at Hunter’s Hill was progressing quite rapidly, therefore, in November 1877, Br John went off to Noumea to make his second Provincial visitation there, leaving Br Ludovic as Acting Provincial in Sydney. It was a rather depressing interlude, with further troubles at St Benedict’s, several novices or junior-professed brothers leaving the order, and no new juniors or postulants coming forward. When Br John returned, he allowed the dispirited Br Ludovic to move his remaining novices out to Hunter’s Hill, despite the building being not quite finished. He also planned for the official opening and blessing by Archbishop Vaughan on May 12th, the feast of the Patronage of St Joseph, after whom the novitiate and, later, the boarding school, were to be named. The opening went well, raising group morale somewhat, and at the annual retreat, which was held at the novitiate at the end of June, three of the Australian brothers made their final profession and another three Australian novices made their first vows. In a move which further improved morale, Br John decided to go ahead with the Napier opening in New Zealand, transferring one of the French brothers from the Wellington foundation as Director and sending two young Australians, including the newly professed Br Joseph, to form the rest of the community.\(^{16}\)

Br Joseph had been the teacher of the ‘Select School’ at St Patrick’s, until his transfer and because an expected, fully-trained French brother had not yet arrived, Br John himself stepped into the breach as Director of the community and teacher of the senior class. He was to combine these duties with his role as Provincial for the next four or five months and his comments on resuming the class-room role are interesting:

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\(^{12}\) Hosie, *Challenge* p. 245.

\(^{13}\) Fogarty, *op.cit.* p. 325.

\(^{14}\) *Annales* pp. 205-212.


\(^{16}\) *Lettres.* 5.7.1878.
I am happy enough to teach class, at least for some time. I am taking advantage of it to examine more closely the Australian character which differs in more than one point from our children in Europe. Then I will be in position to give good direction to the others. To teach a class of thirty pupils was for me a new task, having never had a class of less than two hundred for more than fifteen years.¹⁷

Unfortunately, he does not expatiate on the differences between Australian and European students but his sharpness of observation and flexibility are noteworthy and his comment on class sizes is surely an indication that he must have been accustomed to the largely monitorial system in Scotland.

The French replacement brother, Br Emilian Pontet, arrived in Sydney at the end of November and Br John, almost immediately, appointed him as Director of St Patrick’s community and Head of the Select School. He then departed for his third visit to New Caledonia. During his own time in charge of the Select School Br John reported that attendance had stabilized, although ‘insufficient progress’ had been made; but during the first six months of Br Emilian’s tenure attendance once again began to decline. This was a matter of great concern to the province, because the income from the Select School was the financial support for the novitiate. Perhaps the St Patrick’s parish hostility to French brothers was persisting. Whatever the cause, Br John decided on an established Marist way of improving finances: he authorized St Patrick’s to start accepting boarders and asked the Archbishop to advertise the venture at the time of the clergy’s annual retreat so that word would spread to the country districts. The strategy succeeded. By August 1879, there were four boarders enrolled and the brothers themselves were enlarging the accommodation so that, by year’s end, there was room for twenty. The tiny St Patrick’s site now had a parish school, a select school, a juniorate and a boarding school operating within its narrow confines. Nevertheless, the boarders were soon to move to Hunter’s Hill and the financial basis of the novitiate had been successfully stabilized.¹⁸

In December 1879, word reached Sydney that the Superior General, Br Louis Marie had died and the Oceania Province was invited to elect a delegate to attend the extraordinary General Chapter which would elect his successor. Br John was in New Caledonia at the time, but he quickly returned to Sydney where he was elected as delegate, by the professed brothers of the province. He left Australia in mid-January and the General Chapter convocation was delayed until March ⁷th to allow him to attend the whole session. In his absence, Br Ludovic was again Acting Provincial. There were the usual disagreements at St Benedict’s between the Parish Priest and Br Augustine; but a more significant turbulence had begun to develop. Parkes’ Public Instruction Bill had been passed in the New South Wales parliament at the end of February 1880, to have the effect of withdrawing state aid from denominational schools by the end of 1882. Several Parish Priests were still refusing to surrender the state subsidy, till the last minute, but the Archbishop was hard at work trying to assure both laity and the clergy that the Religious-staffed, alternative system, that he and his suffragans were proposing, would be every bit as efficient as the new Public Schools.

¹⁷ Lettres 31.8.78.
¹⁸ ibid. 11.5.79.
In early June, Br Ludovic received a letter from Br John saying that he would be bringing back ten brothers from Europe and asking if he could organize some funding for them, perhaps through the trustees of the McEncroe bequest. The trustees, however, referred him to the Archbishop whose eyes, one imagines, fairly lit up at the prospect of these timely reinforcements. Leaving the meeting with the Archbishop, Br Ludovic chanced to run into the Vicar General, Fr Gillett OSB, who announced that he had just been appointed Inspector of Schools and would be sending a delegate, a sub-deacon, to inspect the brothers’ schools quite soon. Br Ludovic begged him to defer any such inspection till the Provincial returned from Europe. A week later, Br Ludovic was summoned to the Archbishop’s residence at St John’s College where Dr Vaughan explained that a general plan for Catholic education had been developed. A Council of Education was to be formed to accredit teachers and inspect the schools and he was anxious that the brothers be part of the scheme. It was important that the clergy’s, and the laity’s concerns about the efficiency of the schools be addressed.

Br Ludovic was highly embarrassed at being thus put on the spot; but offered the personal opinion that the Major Superiors would not accept such conditions. Fr Gillett, who was present at the meeting, commented that there was a preference among the Sydney laity for the Irish Christian Brothers and a certain hostility towards the French Marists. To this, Br Ludovic replied that if the diocese could secure the services of the Christian Brothers, the Marist Brothers would make no objection; but he doubted whether the Irish Brothers would accept inspection either. He well knew – and knew that the Archbishop and his Vicar General also knew – that the Irish Brothers had already fought and won this battle in both Ireland and in Melbourne. The meeting ended there; but Br Ludovic was asked to defer his reply to the Provincial until the Council of Education had been set up and the propriety of asking for more Marist Brothers was established.

The Council must have been established rather promptly, because Br Ludovic was summoned back to St John’s the following day to be told that the inspection proposal had been abandoned, that the Archbishop now wanted twelve Marist Brothers to staff three Sydney schools and that he was prepared to pay the fares of these brothers immediately. However, the brothers would not be required to take up their appointment until the end of 1882, because the Parish Priests of St Mary’s cathedral parish and Sacred Heart parish, at Darlinghurst, would not surrender the government subsidy until it was actually terminated by the implementation of the 1880 Act. Br Ludovic duly forwarded this information to Br John in Europe and was again surprised and hurt by the Provincial’s coldness and reserve when they went to meet the boat on his return in November. Even Br Alban, who is loathe to speculate or to adjudicate between these two pioneers of the Australian Province, attributes Br John’s coolness on this occasion to chagrin that his hard won European reinforcements had all been committed before he, or they, had even set foot back in the colony.

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19 Annals of St Joseph’s Novitiate: Entries 4 -19th June 1880.
20 Doyle, op.cit. p. 214.
Establishing a ‘Marist’ System

Br John had been able to recruit the ten new brothers because he was allowed to address the assembled Chapter delegates for two hours about the opportunities and needs of the Australasian mission. But although he visited Scotland after the Chapter finished, only three of the recruits came from the British Isles Province. The remaining seven came from the five French Provinces and none of them spoke English at all fluently, much to Br John’s (and Archbishop Vaughan’s) disappointment. When he arrived back in Sydney in November, the Provincial called a meeting of his council and decided to build a temporary wooden building at Hunter’s Hill, to house the expanding number of boarders at St Patrick’s, then went off for his annual visit to New Caledonia, followed by a visitation of the two schools in New Zealand. In his absence, the new French-speaking brothers lived at Hunter’s Hill and tried to improve their English; but their progress in this endeavour was severely handicapped by the facts that they were heavily involved in building the new boarders’ quarters, that they were all together in one community and that were being supervised by the French-speaking Br Ludovic, who was still acting Provincial – as well as novice master – during Br John’s absence.

Thanks to the manual labour of the Australian novices and the French-speaking brothers, the boarders’ wooden building went ahead so quickly that it was ready for the annual retreat. Sixty-two brothers, novices and juniors were accommodated there in the first week of July 1881. At the end of the retreat, Br John appointed the brothers to the four Sydney schools for which the Marists were now responsible, trying to ensure that the new French speakers were distributed, as thinly as possible, in each of the English-speaking communities. At the mid-July start of the new school year, forty-four boarders moved into the wooden building and Br Emilian brought a community of six, mainly from St Patrick’s, to staff the new St Joseph’s College. By October, there were seventy boarders and Br John and his council decided that an extension to the wooden building would have to be built and an early start made on the permanent, sandstone building for which plans had already been supplied by the Major Superiors in France. The wooden extension was again built by the novices and some of the new French brothers and when school resumed in January 1882 the number of boarders rose to 122.

Between continuing his visitation/inspection of the four schools already in action, negotiating with Archbishop Vaughan about the three new schools he was expected to staff from the start of 1883, and raising the finance to commence the stone buildings at St Joseph’s, Br John was kept more than busy. In this last and very daunting task, he was assisted by Br Ludovic. When a preliminary approach to various banks in Sydney had obtained no offers of loans at less than eight per cent, the latter had the inspiration to approach a wealthy Anglican builder and business man, who had been introduced to him by the Sisters of Mercy, at Church Hill. Mr George Whiting, who had already helped the sisters to purchase the property which became Monte Sant’ Angelo College in North Sydney, persuaded his own bank to offer the Marists a loan at 6.5 per cent with himself

21 Annales p. 225.
22 Naughtin, A Century of Striving, p. 40.
standing as sole guarantor.\textsuperscript{23} With that matter settled, a start was made on the permanent building and Archbishop Vaughan came to lay the foundation stone in October. In his remarks at this ceremony, the Archbishop spoke of the three new school openings and his confidence in the ability of the brothers to staff them adequately. Before Br John could conclude the final negotiations for the handing over of the three schools, however, he was summoned to the next – ordinary – General Chapter of the Order which was due early in 1883.

Br John begged to be excused from attending the Chapter at such a crucial juncture because he lacked confidence in both Br Ludovic and Br Felix, his likely deputies,\textsuperscript{24} but the Superior General, Br Nestor, was adamant and he departed Sydney at the end of November. In spite of Br John’s misgivings, Br Ludovic was left, once again, as Acting Provincial and, in the event, the take-over of the Archbishop’s three former Denominational Schools went quite smoothly, together with the take-over of the Marist Fathers’ parish school at Villa Maria. (This last ‘opening’ had been agreed to by Br John before he left). The assumption of responsibility for the cathedral’s parish school had involved the re-location of the Juniorate from St Patrick’s to St Mary’s. Since the teaching staffs for St Francis’, Haymarket, and Sacred Heart, Darlinghurst also lived at St Mary’s, the overcrowding at St Patrick’s was thus considerably reduced. Nevertheless, the Select School and the parish school were still operating from the Church Hill site, so the Marists were now running an integrated system of eight schools in Sydney (and Parramatta), barely ten years after their first faltering steps at St Patrick’s.

This Marist ‘system’ of Catholic boys’ schools, in effect, replaced the previous ‘system’ of Catholic Denominational schools, supervised by the Council of Education and the Archbishop was anxious to re-assure the laity and the still unenthusiastic clergy that the now Religious-staffed schools were both efficient and adequately supervised. For this reason, he set up a Catholic School Board on which Br John was invited to sit, along with the Vicar General, Dean Mahony, and a number of other senior clergy. One of the first tasks of the new Board was to select an Inspector of schools and a Mr J.W. Rogers, who had previously been the owner and principal of a Catholic boys’ college in Ballarat, Victoria, took up this appointment in the first half of 1883, probably just as Archbishop Vaughan was leaving Australia, to make his \textit{ad limina} visit to Rome in mid-April of that year. Br Ludovic occupied Br John’s place on the Board, in his absence, but the first time its authority impinged on his consciousness was when he received a letter from the Vicar General, as chairman, to inform him that the Board would no longer fund the cleaning and dusting of the classrooms. A second letter arrived, after the brothers had broken-up their schools for the June, mid-winter holiday, telling him that they should not call such holidays, except at the direction of the Inspector of schools.

Br Ludovic replied immediately that the directions he had received were contrary to the agreements signed by the Archbishop and also to the \textit{Constitutions} and \textit{Common Rules} of the Marist Brothers. During the annual retreat, which was held during these mid-winter holidays, he also convened a meeting of the Brothers in charge of the Sydney

\textsuperscript{23} Naughtin, \textit{op.cit.} pp. 42-45.  
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Lettres.} 20.7.82.
schools and together they drafted a joint reply to the Board, asking that the inspections and the implementation of the other changes to the conditions under which they were working be postponed, at least until Br John, the Provincial, returned from the General Chapter.\textsuperscript{25} This letter, and a follow-up by Br Ludovic, did succeed in postponing implementation, but the not entirely unexpected death of Archbishop Vaughan, in England - news of which reached Sydney on August 19\textsuperscript{th} - imposed a further stay on proceedings.\textsuperscript{26} When Br John returned on September 13\textsuperscript{th}, the Catholic community, and especially the clergy component of the community, was still in turmoil over the choice – and nationality - of Vaughan’s successor.\textsuperscript{27} The Irish, at last, were to get a prelate of their own.

While Br John was in Europe, he had paid a visit to Rome in the company of his friend Br Nestor, the Superior General, which included a private audience with the Pope, Leo XIII. When they moved on to Lyon for the General Chapter, however, Br Nestor took ill and died. The Chapter therefore had to elect a new Superior General as well as the Assistants General, which had been its stated purpose. Br John was again allowed to address the Chapter regarding the Australasian mission, but this time managed to attract only two new recruits: a young Englishman, Br Walter Moore and a more mature Belgian, Br Vales Verbeke. After the Chapter, he traveled to Britain where he visited Ireland and took note of the Juniorates and Novitiates established by the De La Salle Brothers and the Patrician Brothers, the latter specifically intended for the Australian mission. He even toyed with the idea of founding a Marist Novitiate in Ireland, also directed towards gathering recruits for Australia; but this notion was never implemented. He set out for the return to Australia, accompanied by Br Walter, and stopped off in South Africa, along the way, to make a Provincial visitation there. When Br Ludovic met him at the boat in Sydney, he found him much more pleasant, cheerful and relaxed than on the two previous occasions.\textsuperscript{28}

Almost as soon as he returned, he attended a meeting of the Catholic School Board, and it did not go well. The Chairman was anxious that the brothers’ schools should adopt the uniform timetable that the Inspector had drawn up and the other changes that had already been proposed to Br Ludovic. Br John objected that a uniform timetable was too cumbersome an imposition, and that some of the other changes constituted ‘interference’ with the internal affairs of the order. The chairman objected to the use of the word ‘interference’ and the discussion went round in circles until it was suggested that there should be a follow up meeting between the Inspector and Br John at which the timetable issue could be resolved. At the subsequent meeting, two days later, Mr Rogers examined the timetable followed in the brothers’ schools and found it met diocesan requirements as regards the proportion of time to be spent on religious instruction and secular subjects. He then went over the proposed diocesan timetable with Br John and

\textsuperscript{25} Annals of St Joseph’s Novitiate. April 25\textsuperscript{th}, June 25\textsuperscript{th} and July 10-11\textsuperscript{th} ‘83.
\textsuperscript{26} Annales p. 256. Br Ludovic’s reporting of Archbishop Vaughan’s intimations of mortality as he left Sydney Harbour is just one of the indications that these Annals were not written up until well after the events they describe. The Annals of the Novitiate, which were better kept, do not mention any such premonitions.
\textsuperscript{27} Lettres 4.10.83. and 1.11.83.
\textsuperscript{28} ibid. 12.6.83. and 19.6.83. and Annals pp. 259-60.
pointed out places where he would be happy to alter it, to be closer to the brothers’
pattern. Br John approved of the modifications but said he was unwilling to adopt the
diocesan timetable, since the brothers’ version already met requirements. The meeting
ended there and Br John went home to write a letter of resignation from the Board.
Explaining this course of action, in a letter to the Assistant General, Br John wrote that
if he continued on the Board, he might be surprised into making ‘concessions which
would harm our work in this country, as well as our religious and Marist spirit which
seems an enigma to many.’

His resignation caused quite a flurry on the Board, especially among the
chairman, the secretary and the Parish Priest of Darlinghurst. A motion was put forward
asking Br John to give his reasons for resigning and an explanation of his refusal to
accept the new regulations. When this motion was declared to be passed unanimously,
however, some of the other members of the Board objected and Fr Coué, the Marist
Fathers’ representative on the Board, later told Br John that the meeting fizzled out.
His resignation was accepted, without question, in a letter from the chairman three
weeks later, but he was asked to outline the ways in which the proposed regulations
clashed with the brothers’ Rules. Despite his assertion that the diocesan regulations
were a threat to the ‘Marist’ spirit of the brothers, Br John’s reply to this request is
of little help in establishing a positive picture of what he understood that ‘Marist Spirit’
to be. He mentions that the diocesan control of suspension and expulsion, of admitting
visitors and Civil Authorities, of setting vacations and of regulating relations with
the clergy via local committees were all problematic. He found the requirements for
‘Registers’ and ‘Returns’ onerous and unnecessary and while the Board’s ‘Duties of
a Teacher’ might be expedient for the employment of a salaried secular teacher, they
were inappropriate for the professed members of a Religious congregation.

If the issues for the Board were control and accountability, the issues for Br John
were to do with confidence and trust. He made no objection to the diocesan inspector
coming into the brothers’ schools, but he wanted it made clear that the relations with
the diocese were to be based on the foundation conditions which had been negotiated
between the Marist Major Superiors and the Archbishop, not dictated by the whims of
the local Parish Priest, the Inspector or, worst of all, some local committee.

The divided
members of the Board had little choice but to accept his explanation, especially since the
new Archbishop had not yet been named. And just as he was penning off this reply to the
Board, a form of accountability which would become increasingly relied upon in Catholic
schools was published in the secular press. In the Civil Service examination for 1883 the
six Marist Brothers’ Sydney schools, (i.e. excluding Parramatta and St Joseph’s College),
had provided sixteen of the one hundred and sixty candidates and ten of the fifty-eight
who were successful: a success rate of 62.5 per cent against a colony-wide average of
36.5 per cent. However much an educational purist might wince, in the parents’ eyes,

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29 Lettres, 4.10.83. The French original reads ‘concessions que nuiraient à notre œuvre dans ce pays aussi
bien qu’à notre esprit religieux et Mariste qui semble un énigme pour beaucoup.’
30 ibid. 8.10.83.
the brothers’ schools had delivered on the Archbishop’s undertaking that the Catholic Schools would be equal to, or better than, the Public Schools.\textsuperscript{31}

Thus, by the end of the first calendar year, in which the financial implications of the Public Education Act of 1880 came into effect, the Marist Brothers had established a network of boys’ schools which replaced the previous Denominational Schools’ network and also satisfied diocesan requirements, while remaining semi-autonomous and distinctive in style. It must be remembered that these were now the only Catholic boys schools in Sydney, because the two Jesuit foundations of 1879 and 1880 were – like St Joseph’s College, Hunter’s Hill – not considered to be ‘systemic’ schools and the other lay, male teaching congregations would not begin to make foundations in Sydney until the Irish Patrician Brothers arrived in 1886 and the Irish Christian Brothers in 1887. The Marist ‘system’ and its autonomy had, of course, been established during the interregnum caused by the departure and subsequent death of Archbishop Vaughan and it remained to be seen how these brothers, still regarded as ‘French’, would feature in the plans of the new, Irish Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Patrick Francis Moran.

**Cardinal Moran and the Development of the Australian Marist Tradition**

In the early months of 1884, Br John was kept busy fielding requests for new openings, supervising the construction of the permanent building at St Joseph’s, doing the rounds of school inspections and developing ‘Standards of Proficiency’ for the brothers’ Primary Schools in Sydney. The 1880 Act had called for new Standards of Proficiency in the Public Schools but these were not implemented until 1884. The New South Wales bishops and the diocesan Inspector of Schools, Mr Rogers, were anxious that the standards in the Catholic schools should be at least as high as in the Public schools and Br John, himself, was of the same mind. Having kept the Inspector at arms length, however, Br John had to provide these Marist ‘Standards of Proficiency’ for the young brothers himself; but he declared in his report to the Assistant General, that ‘we must aim at having almost the same standard as the government.’\textsuperscript{32} Mr Rogers was, then, allowed to inspect the schools – though not to examine the teachers – and Br John altered his own program of inspection so as not to come too quickly on the heels of the diocesan Inspector.\textsuperscript{33}

The notes and comments of these inspections and visits to the classrooms are recorded in some of the monthly letters that Br John sent to the Assistant General in Lyons.\textsuperscript{34} While they do not provide enough information to permit a re-construction of Marist classroom practice at that time, they certainly give a clear indication of Br John’s priorities and those in which he believed his Superiors would be interested. Knowledge of the catechism is always mentioned, as is the state of the writing books and the students’ skill in reading aloud. He is very interested in the teachers’ preparation and energy levels.

\textsuperscript{31} *Lettres*, 1.11.83.
\textsuperscript{32} ibid. 12.7.1884.
\textsuperscript{33} ibid. 12.7.1884.
\textsuperscript{34} They appear, for instance, in *Letters* 12.7.84; 25.5.85; 8.7.85; May 1886; 8.5.87; i.e. one inspection visit for each class in each school, each year.
He thinks many of them talk too much in class, don’t use the ‘signal’ consistently, don’t keep the students quiet enough and some of them use the cane too frequently. Most of the classrooms he was visiting were, of course, primary classrooms, often inadequately partitioned from the neighbouring classes and therefore his stress on quiet and order is hardly surprising.\(^{35}\) When he visited the secondary classes at the Select School or at Hunter’s Hill, he wrote less about classroom practice and more about the teacher’s dedication, ability to inspire the students with enthusiasm, and his recent exam results.

The Belgian brother who had volunteered for Australia after the 1883 General Chapter, Br Vales Verbeke, arrived late in the year and was posted to the Hunter’s Hill community. Br Ludovic, whose health had suffered while carrying the double load of Novice Master and Acting Provincial and also from a heavy fall, while supervising the building at St Joseph’s, had been campaigning for some time for sick leave, either in New Zealand or Europe. With the arrival of Br Vales, who had been Novice Master in Scotland, Br John persuaded Br Ludovic to take his furlough in New Caledonia, while Br Vales replaced him in charge of the novitiate. He reached Noumea in March and spent the remainder of the year there, filling in for Br John only by presiding at the annual retreat at Christmas time. It was even conjectured that he might become a Director of one of the houses there; but, in May 1885, he was recalled to Europe and, a short while later, was nominated as Novice Master at Dumfries, in Scotland. He did call into Sydney for a fortnight, on the way from Noumea to Europe, and was able to make his farewells, but his year’s absence meant that he had missed the arrival of Archbishop Moran and the latter’s opening and blessing of the first permanent boarders’ wing at St Joseph’s.\(^{36}\)

Archbishop Moran, as he still was, arrived in Sydney in September 1884 and made his first visit to St Joseph’s ten day’s later. The blessing and opening of the new wing at Hunter’s Hill did not take place until December 7th, however, and he made this second visit an occasion on which to express his support for the work of the Marist Brothers. In his address, he declared that education was a lively topic for discussion in Sydney and that he believed a great deal of discussion was still needed. He expatiated on the ‘difference between Catholic education and the education given by secularists’ and he praised the work of the brothers not only at St Joseph’s, but also in the city and at the Cathedral and assured the crowd that he ‘highly valued’ the services of these ‘devoted brothers’ who were training ‘good citizens and Christians.’\(^{37}\) The use of this last, key phrase from Marist tradition – Fr Champagnat and the Teacher’s Guide both made use of it – would seem to indicate that the new Archbishop had done his homework or even, perhaps, consulted the brothers before drafting his speech. Taken together with

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\(^{35}\) In a report on Br Claudius’s class at St Mary’s Letters: 13.6.1887, Br John remarks: ‘His results are astonishing but his methods are curious. (It is difficult to decide) as to who shouts the louder, the teacher or the students. Despite his excellent results, the almost incessant noise wearies the neighbouring classes’. (My translation).

\(^{36}\) Annales pp. 261-262.

\(^{37}\) Collection of Circulars (English Edition) p.144. Archbishop Moran’s second visit to St Joseph’s was not written up in the SMH as his first one had been. It was so highly regarded by the brothers, however, that a detailed account of it was sent to the General House and it was circulated internationally, as one of several items, under the heading ‘News from the Missions.’
his signalling of a priority for education, these remarks, to Br John, must have augured well for the Marists’ work under this new episcopate.

Br. John may even have experienced a certain amount of *schadenfreude* as regards the fate of the Catholic School Board. Archbishop Moran dissolved it soon after arriving in Sydney, saying he was making ‘other arrangements for the schools of the Archdiocese.’\(^{38}\) The Chairman, Dean Mahony, was replaced as Vicar General by the Archbishop’s secretary Dr O’Haran, and sent, as Parish Priest, to a country town. While the Inspector, Mr Rogers, had his contract paid out - for the not inconsiderable sum of £2,600.\(^{39}\) It remained to be seen what the new Archbishop’s ‘other arrangements’ might be. Some of them would presumably be foreshadowed in the education decrees of the Plenary Council of the Australasian hierarchy, called for late 1885, and Br John was a little apprehensive when the bishops called for inspection copies of the Marist Brothers’ text books, in preparation for the assembly.\(^{40}\) The Council did, in fact, call for the introduction of texts ‘especially adapted for Australian schools,’ but Br Alban, in his account, notes that this decree does not seem to have been implemented and concludes:

> Nothing affecting school methods or teaching seemed to come from this first Plenary Council of 1885 … Local decisions did however have some impact on the Brothers.\(^{41}\)

Before moving on to these local decisions and their impact, however, it may be worth reminding ourselves of Fogarty’s and O’Farrell’s comments on these Conciliar decrees and Cardinal Moran’s policies, as reflected in them. For although nothing may have changed immediately in the Marist Brothers’ daily classroom practice, the definitions, the scope and the direction of Australian Catholic education spelt out by these decrees were inevitably going to shape the Marist teaching tradition as it expanded and developed in these early decades after the withdrawal of state aid. The Marist Brothers may have been a Vatican-approved order with the rights of appeal to Rome, and they may have been the only non-clerical, male teaching order in Sydney at that time; but by Canon Law - and their own Constitutions - they were bound to work within the parameters established by the bishop. Sydney was the only Australian diocese in which the Marists would be represented until 1893, so the pace and the emphasis with which Cardinal Moran implemented these decrees, was bound to be significant.

Br Ronald draws attention to the fact that the Conciliar decrees of 1885 increased the pressure on Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools and also on the parish clergy to provide and support such schools. In fact, if a Parish Priest refused to support a parish school, or build a new one, he could be removed from his benefice. And once a school had been opened it could not be closed or removed without the consent of the bishop. Br Ronald comments that ‘such sanctions were evidently called for, otherwise

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\(^{38}\) *Freeman’s Journal* 11.10.84 quoted in Doyle, *op.cit.* p. 277.

\(^{39}\) *Lettres* 14.3.85.

\(^{40}\) *ibid.* 12.12.85.

\(^{41}\) Doyle, *op.cit.* p. 278.
they would not have been established”⁴² and we have already seen that, in Archbishop Vaughan’s time at least, many of the parish clergy had been quite recalcitrant. Professor O’Farrell adds that, after 1884, Catholic authorities ‘let it be known that they were not prepared to take any steps to provide religious education for the large number of Catholic children … who were attending state schools’⁴³ and Cardinal Moran, as late as 1911 was still stressing that priests in Sydney were forbidden to visit Public Schools to give religious instruction. This does not seem to have terminated the Children’s Masses and Sunday School classes that the Marist Brothers ran in the Sydney parishes where they had schools prior to 1885; but it must have had the effect of focusing their educational and catechetical efforts more narrowly on the children attending Catholic parochial schools.⁴⁴

Br Ronald also points out that this First Plenary Council not only encouraged the development of Catholic secondary schools, without which the Catholic primary school system ‘would remain half complete’, but also placed parents under a ‘gravi obligatione’ to send their children to such schools, rather than be tempted by the Superior Public Schools which were beginning to develop around this time.⁴⁵ Br Ronald sees the bishops, in 1885, as following earlier Vatican pronouncements in this area and also ‘the sound basic theology and philosophy of men like Geoghegan and Polding’⁴⁶ but O’Farrell, rightly, takes the implications of Cardinal Moran’s implementation of the decrees, a stage further:

Moran, while continuing to seek state support, did so on altered grounds and with much less aggression. Previously … Catholic education was conceived as a totality in which religion infused all learning, all subjects of study, there being no distinction between secular and religious. Moran demanded state support not for the teaching of religion, but for the teaching in Catholic schools of secular subjects. His education programme was to build a Catholic system of schools which would teach what the state taught – plus religion.

The rationale of this was practical, pragmatic, political … If Catholic schools taught these (secular subjects) to a standard and content identical with the teaching of the state schools, Catholics, he reasoned, would have an unanswerable case for state support … Accordingly, the bishops sought, and got, inspection of Catholic schools, which had the effect of imposing complete conformity on the Catholic system and of conceding all educational initiative to the state.⁴⁷

Again, this re-definition of Catholic education, by the Cardinal, was bound to colour the local Marists’ understanding of what the Church expected of them.

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⁴² Fogarty, *op.cit* p. 309.
⁴⁴ *Annals of St Joseph’s Novitiate* April 10-29th and May 9th 1883.
⁴⁵ Fogarty, *op.cit* pp. 324-325.
⁴⁶ *ibid.* p. 383.
A final aspect of the Cardinal’s policy – though one not foreshadowed in the conciliar decrees – which was also to play some part in shaping the Australian Marist teaching tradition was his attitude to the Irish issue in Sydney, which Professor O’Farrell describes - in some detail – as being selective and ambiguous.  

We have already seen that Archbishop Moran had declared his appreciation of the Marist Brothers’ work in Sydney when he officiated at the St Joseph’s opening. And when Br John paid him a courtesy visit prior to the Archbishop’s departure for Rome in 1885, the occasion on which he was to receive the Red Hat, Dr Moran told him that he had just laid the foundation stones of three new parish primary schools – at Redfern, Leichhardt and Surry Hills – which he hoped the Marists would staff. However, early in 1886 Fr Rigney told Br Paul, the Director at Parramatta, that the Cardinal was sounding him out about the possibility of having the Marist Brothers swap Parramatta for St Peter’s, Surry Hills so that the Irish Patrician Brothers could take over the Parramatta school and farm property, where they could start a boarding school and novitiate. When Br John heard this report he relayed a reply, back through Fr Rigney, that he would oppose such a move for several reasons including, interestingly, ‘the (Marist) Brothers had been founded for rural schools and Parramatta was the only Sydney school in any way fitting that aim.’  

The Patrician Brothers were not only Irish, they were also diocesan in organization – or, at least, they were when they first arrived in Australia - and in this matter Cardinal Moran was less hard-line than his Irish suffragan bishops in Maitland, Bathurst and Goulburn. The country bishops had paid for the hasty education of a group of these Irish Brothers, ten of whom stayed overnight at St Joseph’s, Hunter’s Hill in September 1884, on their way to their inland postings. Br John comments on their youth and inexperience, though each of the three communities was led by a senior brother, and he noted that they were already having difficulty with their Irish (Australian) bishops over the question of diocesan control. Just as they were arriving in Australia, their Major Superiors in Ireland were petitioning Rome for Vatican recognition; but when the three Australian communities asked their local bishops to support this application, they were met with a flat refusal. Bishop Murray of Maitland was particularly adamant in his opposition and the Patricians left his diocese and moved to Armidale in 1889. They had completely withdrawn from the Goulburn diocese by 1898 and were driven out of the Bathurst diocese in the 1920s.  

The Irish Christian Brothers, who were also a Vatican-approved congregation, were just as independent of the bishops as the Marists but, as we have seen earlier, were, in principle, more popular among the Catholic laity and parish clergy, a point that

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49 Lettres 9.6.1885.  
50 ibid. 31.8.86.  
51 ibid. 9.10.84.  
Br John was particularly sensitive about.\(^55\) As early as December 1884, Cardinal Moran was talking of building a new episcopal palace next to St Mary’s Cathedral, and opening a High School there. Br John was not opposed to the High School idea, in fact, he thought it would be advantageous to move the Select School, from St Patrick’s, to this more central site, surrounded, as it was, by parklands. However, one of his motives was the fear ‘that if we do not consent … they will not fail to invite others.’\(^56\) Negotiations with the Cardinal about the High School and who should pay for renovations and/or own the site dragged on for more than two years. But the Christian Brothers returned to Sydney in 1887, opening a school at Balmain which the Parish Priest had been demanding the Marist Brothers should staff since 1881.\(^57\) And when Fr Le Rennetel, the Marist Parish Priest at St Patrick’s, Church Hill, told him that the Irish Christian Brothers were now under consideration for the St Mary’s High School, Br John acted.\(^58\) The Select School, was moved from St Patrick’s to the Cathedral in August 1887. Ironically, the new Vicar General whom Cardinal Moran had appointed, Dr O’Haran, was to force the Marist Brothers out of the St Mary’s site in 1911 and the Irish Christian Brothers were compelled, under threat of episcopal interdict to take their place.\(^59\)

**Local Decisions and the End of Br John’s First Provincialship**

When the Select School staff and pupils transferred to the Cathedral site in 1887, St Patrick’s, the school that Br Ludovic had dubbed ‘the Cradle of the Institute in Australia’ reverted to its original role, as a parish primary school. In its reversion to this original capacity, St Patrick’s was grouped along with the other Marist schools in Sydney - and those of the other Religious Orders which were now beginning to establish themselves - into six Inspectorial Districts. St Patrick’s was grouped with the St Mary’s parish school and Sacred Heart, Darlington in the 1\(^{st}\) District. St Francis’ (Haymarket) and St Benedict’s (Broadway) were in the 2\(^{nd}\) District. Villa Maria (Hunter’s Hill) was in the 5\(^{th}\) District and when North Sydney – the last Sydney Marist school opened during Br John’s first term as Provincial – began in 1888 it was placed in the 6\(^{th}\) District. These diocesan inspectors were appointed to ‘examine the schools in scholastic progress, attendance and suitability of premises,’ not the proficiency of the teachers.\(^60\) As we have seen, Br John, in his Constitutional capacity as Provincial Visitor, saw to the training and pedagogical supervision of the brothers as teachers.

Mention of the North Sydney opening is significant for three reasons. Firstly, it again underlines the ‘image’ and expectations of the Marist Brothers’ education at that time. North Sydney was a Jesuit parish from 1878 and the Jesuits, as we have seen, had

\(^{55}\) Br John had cheerfully paid, in advance, for two hundred copies of the English translation of *The Life of Fr Champagnat*; but he must have intended them for the education of the novices and young brothers. When the books arrived in Sydney in, July 1887, he was not anxious to have them too widely circulated in convents and presbyteries, because he feared they would draw too much attention to the Marists’ French origins. *Lettres* 4.7.88.

\(^{56}\) *Lettres* 31.12.84.

\(^{57}\) *ibid.* 16.7. 81.

\(^{58}\) *ibid.* 11.7.87.

\(^{59}\) Doyle, *op.cit.* p. 452.

\(^{60}\) *ibid.* p. 345.
opened their collegiate day school and boarding school in Sydney in 1878 and 1879 respectively. Yet when it came to providing a boys’ primary school in his parish – as he was obliged to, by the decrees of the 1885 Plenary Council – the Parish Priest, Fr Kelly, turned to the teaching brothers, not to the teaching members of his own Congregation. As Professor O’Farrell again points out:

The Jesuits catered for a small elite, attempting via literary and cultural channels to produce Catholic leaders … In contrast with the general liberal education offered by the Jesuits, the Brothers insisted on early specialization in either professional or commercial courses: they aimed to provide a sound utilitarian vocational education which would fit the rising Catholic community for the civil service or even the professions. This was precisely what the rising Catholic community wanted for its sons, particularly when the fees were around half those charged by the Jesuits.  

The question of fees is the second reason why the North Sydney opening was significant. Like the other parish openings in Sydney, it had been accepted on the conditions laid down by Fr Champagnat, himself, and maintained by his successors, namely, that the Parish Priest provide the school premises and a suitable residence for the brothers plus a guaranteed stipend of £60 per brother, per annum. The stipend was to be taken out of the fees paid by the students, but if these fell short, the Parish Priest was expected to make good the shortfall. Fr Kelly had made no difficulty about accepting this arrangement but, within three years, his successor, Fr Daly SJ, was complaining about having to make up the shortfall of £2.10s in May 1891. Br John met with Fr Daly and the mayor of North Sydney and the matter ended there – successfully for the brothers. However this financial guarantee was an on-going problem with several of the Sydney Parish clergy, notably the Parish Priest of Darlinghurst, Dr O’Haran at St Mary’s and, strangely, Fr Le Rennetel SM, the then Parish Priest of St Patrick’s. In fact, this last pastor actively encouraged his secular clergy confreres to resist Br John’s claims for deficits. He wanted the brothers to be financially independent of the parish and to charge ‘whatever the traffic would bear’. When Br John pointed out that Fr Champagnat had written this arrangement into the Rules precisely to make the schools available as cheaply as possible, Fr Le Rennetel was unconvinced and continued to refuse payment of any deficits.

The third reason the North Sydney opening is significant was its singularity: the only Australian Marist opening between 1883 and 1893 and the only Sydney opening prior to 1896. It’s not that there were no requests for new foundations in Sydney, in New South Wales or in Australia generally – these were plentiful. The real problem was recruitment or – as the brothers would have described it - ‘vocations’. Local vocations from Australia and New Zealand, including some mature-age and teacher-trained postulants continued to trickle into the novitiate; but only eleven brothers were sent out from Europe between 1890 and 1902. Enrolments at St Joseph’s and the High School at

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61 O’Farrell, op. cit. p. 239.
62 Lettres 2.5.91.
63 ibid. 21.4.92.
St Mary’s, as well as the parish schools, increased and required more generous staffing. Moreover, Cardinal Moran had let it be known, early on, that Sydney was the priority. He did not object to an opening in Auckland but ‘Sydney brothers were not to be used’. The several New Zealand openings that Br John did supervise, during this period, were all staffed by brothers sent directly out from Europe, at the request of the bishops concerned, or by some of the New Zealanders who had earlier crossed the Tasman, to do their novitiate at St Patrick’s or at Hunter’s Hill.

One Australian opening, outside of Sydney, and away from the influence of the Irish bishops, that Br John did try to arrange, during this decade, was at Armidale. He recommended this foundation several times to the Major Superiors at St Genis Laval between 1882 and 1887, partly because Bishop Torregiani of that diocese was known favorably to Br John from British contacts, partly perhaps, because – as we have also seen - he believed that rural foundations were part of the Marist Brothers’ primary mission. The motivation he quotes most frequently, however, was to develop a dry, cool, inland establishment which would provide a healthy environment for the brothers, away from the humid, semi-tropical climate of Sydney. Several of the European brothers, like Br Augustine McDonald and Br Walter Moore, who had accompanied Br John back from the 1883 General Chapter, suffered from health problems and although the semi-tropical climate had ‘cured’ Br John’s own T.B. he was on the lookout for a place like Armidale with its ‘elevation, 3000ft above sea level and …its distance from the coast, which assures it of drier air than Sydney’. In the event, no European brothers were sent out for this foundation and the Patrician Brothers made the first opening there, after their departure from Maitland.

The Australian opening, which did ‘break the drought’ and establish a Marist foothold outside of Sydney, was made at Kilmore, Victoria in 1893. It was made for the same rural and health motives which had attracted Br John to the Armidale project. Success in getting the Kilmore foundation started was partly due to the persistence of the Parish Priest, Fr Farelly, backed up by the Melbourne Archbishop, Dr Carr who was anxious to open more schools, but also to use competition with the Marists to strengthen his hand in negotiations with the Irish Christian Brothers. Partly, it was due to the timely arrival of a mature-age European re-inforcement, Br Austin Somers, who had landed in Sydney, after a stint in South Africa, in 1892. A second foundation in Victoria, at Bendigo, was made a few months later and both these new establishments were soon providing Australian ‘vocations’ for the novitiate at Hunter’s Hill, thus breaking Sydney’s stranglehold on Marist expansion in Australia. By that time, though, Br John was off, on his way to the next General Chapter in Lyon and this time he did not return: he was appointed as Provincial of the British Isles Province, at the Chapter and his place, in Oceania, was taken by the French-born, Deputy Provincial, Br Felix Garel.

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64 Lettres. 14.3.85.
65 Doyle, op. cit. p. 367.
66 Lettres 22.5.1887.
67 Boland, op. cit. pp. 182-186.
When Br John arrived in Australia in 1876 he had found a Province of twenty-three brothers, novices and postulants staffing three schools in Sydney and one in the Pacific Islands. When he departed, in 1893, there were upwards of seventy brothers and trainees running a dozen schools in Australia and another ten or so in New Zealand and the islands. In supervising the growth of the Province, especially in Australia, we have seen that besides being both pragmatic and professional, he was also quite conscious of trying to defend and deepen the Marist character of those schools. Thus, he resisted the efforts of Archbishop Vaughan’s School Inspector to impose a diocesan curriculum, timetable and sets of non-Marist text books. He resisted the efforts of the diocesan clergy to interfere with the funding system of the schools so as to preserve Fr Champagnat’s intention of making education available to the widest possible range of students. And he kept alive the Marist traditions of manual labour – in the building of both at St Patrick’s and also of Hunter’s Hill – and, albeit with some difficulty, of a sentimental commitment to country foundations. In the teacher-training regime that he gradually established for the juniors, novices and young brothers, he was equally strenuous in his efforts to instill reverence for Fr Champagnat and to be faithful to the best aspects of the Marist teaching tradition; but, to appreciate that fidelity, it will be necessary to look more closely at that regime. This will be the theme of the following chapter.